

Annotated
for Content
Only.

423 Rd.
K , KY
March 21, 2007

Dear Mrs.

I am writing this letter to tell you how much I enjoy coming to the library every day. Thank you for teaching me how to do research on the Internet. I enjoyed writing the animal article about baboons. I enjoy being in your class and love that you push me to read AR books. I think you will be proud to know that I have been the top reader all year in the fourth grade. My personal favorite is a fiction book called, Among the Free. It was about a third born child named Luke Garner trying to make all third born children free. In this book, mothers that have a third child must kill it. At Population Police Headquarters, (when they are free) Luke tells the whole country that he was a third born child and that third born children did not cause hunger. He reveals that the Population Police kept the food for themselves. I would like for you to encourage future fourth grade students to read this fascinating book. I thought I might share with you some of the wonderful features I noticed relating to this book.

One of the best features of Among the Free was the interesting way Margaret Haddix hooks me with a fantastic beginning. For example: "Luke hurry in!" cried my mother." Her hook or lead made me fear that Luke would be caught. I also wondered if he *would* be caught as an illegal third born child. In all of her exciting books she begins them with leads that build

addresses
audience's
needs

authentic
purpose

sufficient
support

specific
details

curiosity for me. They catch my attention to make me want to read the rest of the story and not put the book down.

I have used leads that are catchy in my stories just like Margaret Haddix. I usually start them out with an exclamatory sentence to get things heated up so my reader will want to read on. My personal narrative, "Open Sea," had an extremely gross but outstanding beginning. This made my reader want to read on. I think my readers will think that deep-sea fishing is sickening in the beginning, but in the end they will realize how much fun I had fishing.

Another interesting literary element Margaret Haddix used in Among the Free was dialogue. The exciting conversations made me feel like I was there. For example, "Haven't you heard? We've taken over the government!" yelled the man. "Really we're free?" I exclaimed." This conversation between the characters made me feel excited. Her dialogue made me read further and further. The superb dialogue she uses is awesome. It helped me understand the characters better. Dialogue makes her stories sound more believable.

I also used dialogue in some of my stories. Like Margaret Haddix, I tried to use intriguing dialogue. In my personal narrative, I used dialogue to make my story sound outstanding. Adding dialogue makes the story of my personal experience sound more interesting. It makes my reader feel like he or she is part of the conversation. This book helped me learn why dialogue is important. For example, when I was writing my story I wrote what Josh had said, "Dad, I have a big one! I

develops
the connection
between literacy
skills (reading +
writing)

literacy
connection

describes
strategy

analysis of own decision { can't reel it in! HELP!!!” “Josh pull harder!” my uncle screamed. Without dialogue, my readers wouldn't be able to comprehend the real action-taking place in my narrative. *analysis reflection*

connection of reading Looking back over my fourth grade experience, my favorite activity was when I made a game out of “Among the Free.” To complete this project, I used a cardboard box to make the game board. Then I colored squares like a checkerboard. I wrote questions relating to the story and multiple-choice answers. Then I gathered up people to play the game. It didn't take long to complete this project. It only took about two hours because I memorized the book and knew the questions I was going to include in the game. The project was super easy because it didn't take long to think of some rules or to find the supplies for the game. By making the game, I improved my reading enormously and encouraged others to read it, too. I have read this book so many times I have it pictured in my mind like a movie.

analysis of strengths Mrs. , thank you for suggesting this book to me. It has helped improve my reading and writing skills. I think my greatest strength in writing now is coming up with good ideas for my stories. I know how to find and use better vocabulary in my stories to make them sound more exciting. My reading level has soared! This is because I have increased my reading level by three levels! I also have made all A's on my report card. By *voice* writing more detailed stories, I have had more proficient and distinguished scores on my open responses. Thank you again for suggesting I read this book! Remember to encourage your future fourth

support claims about self →

graders to read Among the Free. It is a remarkable and exciting book!

Your student,

Instructional Implications:

In order for the student to move forward instructionally in Content, more focus on insightful purpose needs to be addressed. The letter was somewhat formulaic, which did not lend the writer to have a in-depth understanding of the inner nature of the impact of reading the book to the development of his/her writing.

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Your student,